

(May 15th, 2011)

If you know someone who you think would benefit from being an Insider, feel free to forward this PDF to them so they can sign up [here](#).

Quick tips for our Insider friends!

Hey Insiders!

This bi-weekly Quick Tips is a few days early as I'm re-jigging the schedule so I can publish the newsletters on Sundays, when I'm not onsite at a client or teaching a class.

We're heading off tomorrow to Michigan and then Houston to spend some time on-site with two of our long-term clients. On the weekend in between we're planning to go to [The Henry Ford](#), the largest indoor/outdoor museum complex in the US. I've posted some of the photos from our trip to Munich in April (see [here](#)) and I'll post more soon.

The latest book I finished is Ray Bradbury's classic *Fahrenheit 451*, which I can't believe I've only just read for the first time. It's a quick read and concerns a fireman in the future where firemen start fires to burn books rather than putting out fires. A very disturbing look at censorship and societal control – can you imagine a world without books? Well worth checking out.

Please [let us know](#) if you liked what you read/saw here and/or have any suggestions for future Quick Tips.

Paul's Ponderings

While we were in Chicago the latest SharePoint database maintenance whitepaper from Microsoft was published. It contains (un)informational gems like (paraphrasing):

- Run CHECKDB, and if it shows problems, run repair to fix them (without any mention whatsoever of backups or the problems repair can cause).
- After shrinking a database, grow it again and then rebuild all the indexes.

Unbelievable. I'm now reviewing the whitepaper comprehensively so it can be republished with correct information in it. I had fun last Thursday when I taught the SQL Server day of the latest Sharepoint Microsoft Certified Master class in Redmond – debunking many of the myths in the SharePoint space about SQL Server.

My topic today is about information and advice – and who can you trust?

I've heard from many people over the years that Microsoft has caused so many problems for them because Microsoft consultants/blogs/whitepapers have stated incorrect information. Because the information comes from a reputable source, it's deemed to be correct. But when it's actually wrong, it creates havoc – as people who aren't experts believe the information and then

it's incredibly hard to convince them otherwise. The SharePoint whitepaper is one example. In another case I heard of a Microsoft consultant advising that the number of tempdb data files AND log files should be equal to the number of processor cores. And one of my famous corruption example stories is of a Microsoft account manager advising a customer to implement a backup strategy that eventually led to that customer going out of business.

Now, I'm not trying to bash Microsoft. I'm trying to illustrate the fact that even the most trustworthy of general sources can lead you astray sometimes if one of its employees inadvertently gives out information when they're not qualified to do so. But how do you tell if you're not an expert yourself? That's what whitepapers are for, right?

The situation gets a lot trickier when you start looking at people's blogs and downright dangerous when you start looking at Q&A forums where anyone can answer – even those forums with comprehensive reputation-building systems. I've seen some utterly horrendous bits of advice being given out, and every week I see lots of people providing answers that are incorrect.

Even reputable sources might provide information that isn't correct for your scenario. For example, the information you're reading in a blog post could have been written for 2005, but the behavior has changed for 2008 in such a way that would be detrimental to your system. Lots of misconceptions arise that way. Check out the [60-page PDF](#) that has my myth-a-day blog series from April 2010 which debunks all kinds of myths and misconceptions.

So the call to action this time: it's an informational minefield out there – make sure the information you're using comes from a trustworthy source – someone whose general reputation is established and well-known. And then find it corroborated by someone else. And then test it before putting it in production.

I'm really interested to know your views on (un)trustworthy information—feel free to [drop me a line](#), confidentially as always.

Video Demo

Several times recently I've been asked about checkpoints and how to track the I/O load they place on SQL Server. There are two trace flags you can use to trace checkpoint information so you can tell which database is the one undergoing a checkpoint when an I/O spike occurs. To show you this I thought I'd do a demo for you. The short video (11 minutes) shows how to track checkpoints using perfmon, the trace flags, and looking in the log to examine the checkpoint log records themselves.

I produced the video in WMV and MOV formats so everyone can watch. You can get the videos:

- For WMV: [here](#)
- For MOV: [here](#)

I recommend downloading before watching. And you can get the demo code [here](#).

SQLskills Offerings

We'll be in Germany and London for two three-day conferences in June – see my blog post [here](#).

Our four Immersion Events in Bellevue, Washington in August are filling up and a few hardy souls are even taking all four classes in a row – wow! See [here](#) for more details.

We have a new combined SQL Server and failover clustering health check available – give us 8 hours and we'll show you what's going wrong with your system, without needing access to your system. Fast, efficient and serious ROI. [Let me know](#) if you're interested – special rates for Insiders.

Summary

I hope you've enjoyed this issue - I really enjoy putting these together.

If there is anything else you're interested in, we'd love to hear from you - [drop us a line](#).

Thanks - Paul and Kimberly